1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda



234 the second prayer of the village dairy, being offered when
778 shutting up the buffaloes for the night.

The increasing sanctity of the different grades of dairy
788 is shown very clearly by the increasing stringency in the rules
784 of conduct of the dairyman. The *tarvalikartmokh* may sleep in the living hut on any night in the week, and there are no
793 restrictions on his intercourse with women. The *kudrpalikartmokh* may only sleep in the hut on Sundays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, and is prohibited from intercourse with Teivali women. The *wursol* is limited to two nights, Sunday and Wednesday, and, though himself a Teivali man, is prohibited from intercourse with Teivali women. The *kugvalikartmokh* has similar restrictions, but the *pohkartpol* of Kanòdrs must avoid women altogether, and this is almost certainly the case with the *palol* also.

[262] The *tarvalikartmokh* takes his buttermilk and food without any ceremony. The *kudrpalikartmokh* must hold his food in his hands throughout his meal and must not put it on the ground.

In the case of the *wursol* we meet first with the ceremonial drinking of buttermilk, which must in this case be poured into the leaf-cup from the vessel called *ertatpun*. The *kugvalikartmokh* drinks buttermilk sitting on the seat outside his dairy and pours from the *ertatpun*, drinking three times only and saying "*Oñ*" each time.

The *pohkartpol* of Kanòdrs has to take his food with very special precautions. He sits on the wall of his dairy and his hand must not touch his mouth nor the leaf-cup his lips. At the *ti* the drinking of buttermilk has become a definite ceremony in which the *kaltmokh* pours out drink for the *palol* with prescribed formulæ, but, strangely enough, the *palol* does not suffer from the same restrictions against touching his mouth as the *pohkartpol* of Kanòdrs, though the latter holds an office which in most ways is distinctly less sacred than that of the *palol*.

234 The clothing of each grade is also regulated. Perhaps the
292 most important feature here is the use of the garments called
793 *tuni*. These are made of dark grey cloth of a quite different kind from that of the ordinary clothes worn by the Todas.

178

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda



The garments are procured from the Badagas, and cloth of the same kind, called *ān*, is used to enwrap the corpse in the funeral ceremonies. It is mentioned as the ordinary clothing of a woman in the legend of Kwoten, and is almost certainly the ancient clothing of the Todas still persisting in ceremonial in connexion with the dead and in the dairy ritual.

The *tuni* is only worn by the higher grades of the dairyman-priesthood and by the *palikartmokh* of the Teivaliol. The *palol* wears *tuni* only, both his loin-cloth and his mantle being of this material. The *kaltmokh* has no need for a *tuni*, for when he is engaged in his work at the *ti* he has to be naked, and when away from the *ti* and in the sleeping hut he wears a small piece of *tuni*, the *petuni*, in his girdle, the piece of cloth marking the difference between the full *kaltmokh* and the *perkursol*.

The *wursol*, the *kugvalikartmokh*, and the Teivali *palikartmokh* only wear the *tuni* when actually engaged in the dairy work and leave it inside the dairy at other times. I am doubtful whether the *pohkartpol* of Kanòdrs resembles the *palol* or the lower grades in this respect.

Although the *palikartmokh* of the *tarvali* and the *kudrpali* never wear the *tuni*, a small piece of this cloth is put in the girdle during the ordination ceremonies, and this may be a relic of a time when every dairyman wore the *tuni*.[1] In the secret language (see Chap. XXV) the word *petuni* is used in one place as the equivalent of 'uniform,' and this seems to indicate that the *petuni* is regarded as the badge of a dairyman.

The use of the leaves and bark of the sacred *tudr* tree is another feature which distinguishes different dairies. In the *tarvali* it is, so far as I know, not used at all. In the *kudrpali* it is only used in the *pepeirthti* ceremony. The *wursol* uses *tudr* in his ordination ceremonies, but not in the ordinary ritual of his dairy, nor is it used in the daily ritual of the *ti* dairy, though largely used in the purification of the dairy and of the dairy vessels, and in the ordination ceremonies of the *palol*.

[1] It is in favour of this supposition that in the legend Kwoten wore the *tuni* when acting as *palikartmokh* although he was one of the Tartharol.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda



only occasion on which a dairyman of this grade prepares food. Thus, when the milk of the *wursulir* is used ceremonially as a food by ordinary people, the food is prepared by the dairyman-priest. One feature of the *irpalvusthi* ceremony is that the work is performed *kabkaditi* in every dairy, and it is possible that this sign of increased respect is intended to counteract the desecration which is about to take place in the use of the milk by the profane. As I have already pointed out, the *irpalvusthi* ceremony has a strong resemblance to a sacrificial feast, in which people partake of the sacred animal, but in this case it is the milk of the animal and not the animal itself which is taken.

A further indication of the sanctity of milk is given in the prohibition against the drinking of milk by a widower or widow during a period which, as we shall see later, may extend to many months.

The restrictions on the use of the milk of the sacred animals have the general characters associated with taboos, and the whole daily ritual of the dairy would seem to be designed to remove the taboo. It is possible that at one time the milk of the sacred buffaloes was not used at all, and that these animals only suckled their calves. If then the Todas had begun to milk the sacred buffaloes, it is natural that the milking and churning should have been accompanied by ritual designed to counteract the evils to be expected from the profanation of the sacred substance and the breaking of the taboo. In certain circumstances even now the Todas do not milk their sacred buffaloes, but allow them to suckle their calves only. If a *ti* dairy, or even one of a lower grade, has no dairyman, the buffaloes are not milked, though they are still tended by some unsanctified person and are kept ready to take their part in the dairy ritual if a dairyman should again be appointed.

## Special Dairy Customs

The general method of treating the milk in the dairy procedure seems to be the same as that generally followed in India and other hot countries. The milk is allowed to

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda



are not used at funerals. They are also distinguished as *patatmani* and *ertatmani*, a distinction not met with in any other village dairy. It seems probable that they are the representatives of the two kinds of bells of a *ti*, the *mani* proper and the *kudrsmani*. The *ertatmani* of Kiudr are 'fed' with buttermilk, a procedure not followed, so far as I know, in any other dairy, but it may be that this is a feature of the procedure of the *ti* dairy which escaped me. Certainly the most likely explanation of the existence of these bells at Kiudr is that they are survivals of its former position as a *ti* dairy.

The villages of Kiudr and Teidr both belong to the Teivaliol, and this raises the question whether this division of the Todas may not have possessed *ti* herds and *ti* dairies of their own at one time, and may not always have had to be content with providing dairymen for institutions belonging to the Tartharol. No information could be given on this point, but it seems unlikely that dairies and places belonging to a Tarthar clan should have been handed over to the Teivaliol when they were no longer used as *ti* dairies and *ti* places.

Certain Tarthar villages are also said to have had at one time *ti* dairies, especially the sacred places of Nòdrs and Òdr. This probably means that there is a tradition that the buffaloes of the Nòdrs *ti* were at one time kept at these places which, as we have seen, are still visited by the *palol* during his ordination ceremonies.

The process of extinction of *ti* institutions can be seen in progress at the present time. The Nidrsi *ti* is not now in working order; there has been no *palol* for some years and its dairies are unoccupied. It is said that a *palol* would have to be appointed temporarily if it was desired to perform the second funeral ceremonies of a Nidrsi man, but in the present condition of the Nidrsiol, it seems to me not at all unlikely, either that the rule will be disregarded, or that the second funeral ceremonies will not be performed, and that the Nidrsi *ti* will become absolutely extinct, possibly dragging down another institution into extinction with it.

The Kwòdrdoni *ti* is now only active for a short time once every year in order to satisfy a ceremonial requirement of the

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda



177 Kotas, and this institution may possibly soon become little
178 more than a name. If it were not for the Kotas, it would undoubtedly be as near extinction as the *ti* of Nidrsi. One
234 *palol* of the Pan *ti* has recently ceased to be appointed, and the same difficulty which has led to his disappearance will probably sooner or later vacate the other office, and Pan will follow in the footsteps of the other clans. Many of the dairies belonging even to the more prosperous *ti* institutions are now disused, and some have completely vanished. The legend of Kwoto preserves a tradition of ceremonial accompanying the migration of the buffaloes of the Kars *ti* which has now entirely disappeared, and nothing is known of the special features of ritual which were practised at many *ti* dairies which have become extinct.

Of dairies of other grades, the *poh* of Kanòdrs is now only occupied for a short time once a year, and its ceremonial may soon also become extinct. The conical *poh* of Kars and the seven-roomed *kudrpali* of Nòdrs are dairies which have ceased to exist, and with the extinction of the latter have gone completely all traces of the ritual which was practised in this kind of dairy, and nothing is known as to the meaning of the seven rooms.

Some of these changes are recent, and due to the altered conditions produced by the general invasion of the Nilgiris, but others date back to a time before Europeans came to the hills, and were due to intrinsic conditions, chiefly the hardships connected with the ritual practised in certain of the dairies. The altered surroundings of the Todas are undoubtedly hastening the process of decay, and institutions which would probably have lasted for centuries will now almost certainly disappear in a few decades.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda



were taken from the fingers, and the coins were removed and redistributed to those who had given them. The people told me that when the body was swung over the fire, the dead person went to Amnòdr with all the ornaments and objects then on the bier, and that the removal of the things afterwards would not deprive the dead person of their use in the next world.

It would seem as if this ceremony of swinging the body over the fire was directly connected with the removal of the objects of value. The swinging over the fire would be symbolic of its destruction by fire, and this symbolic burning has the great advantage that the objects of value are not consumed and are available for use another time.

This is probably the real explanation of the ceremony, but it is not the explanation given by the Todas themselves. They say that long ago, about 400 years, a man supposed to be dead was put on the funeral pyre, and, revived by the heat, he was found to be alive and was able to walk away from the funeral place. In consequence of this the rule was made that the body shall always be swung three times over the fire before it is finally placed thereon. I could not discover the significance of the small wooden framework held under the body. Its appearance suggests that it is a miniature bier.

The objects of value having been removed, the body is now burnt. Formerly it was put on the pyre face downwards, and in the accounts of funerals given by Marshall[1] and Walhouse[2] thirty years ago, this was done, but it is no longer the custom, and in recent funerals attended by Mr. Thurston and myself the body was put on the fire with the face upwards. I was told that Teikirzi ordained that the body should be consumed face downwards, and it was believed that if this were not done, the dead person would have to make the journey to Amnòdr backwards. This seems to imply that the world of Amnòdr is below this world and that the dead person should be burnt in such a way that his face is set towards his future abode.

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 176.
[2] *Ind. Antiq.*, 1874, iii. 274.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda



genealogical record, give for 1902, 132·2 men for every 100 women, a proportion distinctly greater than that of the census, which suggests that it is in the female portion of the community that my records are most defective.

In the table on p. 474 taken from Mr. Punnett's paper, it is seen that the data derived from the genealogical record agree with those of the Census Reports in showing on the whole a progressive decrease in the excess of men over women. The number of families in the first group is too small to give them much importance, but for the three succeeding generations of the Tartharol, the numbers of males for every 100 females are 159·7, 131·4, and 129·2, while for the Teivaliol the figures are 259, 202, and 171 respectively.

The Census Reports and the genealogical record thus agree in showing a progressive diminution in the excess of men over women.

There can be little doubt as to the cause of this. All accounts of the Todas agree in attributing to them the practice of female infanticide, though, at the present time, the Todas are very chary of acknowledging the existence of the practice. They deny it absolutely for the present, and they are reluctant to speak about it for the past.

I do not think that there is the slightest doubt that it was at one time very prevalent, and that it has greatly diminished in frequency, but that it is still practised to some extent. The chance remarks of children to my interpreter, Samuel, had shown him that the practice is still followed occasionally, and I think it far from unlikely that it is even now not a very rare occurrence.

In Mr. Punnett's table, it will be seen that the genealogical data show that the excess of men is far greater in the Teivaliol than in the Tartharol, and the excess in the former is so great as to leave little doubt that the practice is still followed in this division not infrequently. If this is so, it is probably due to the fact that the Teivaliol chiefly inhabit the more outlying parts of the hills, so that, on the whole, they have been less affected than the Tartharol by the various influences which have come into the lives of the Todas. An

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda



595 842 851 The fatherhood of a child depends entirely on the *pursütpimi* ceremony, so much so that a dead man is regarded as the father of a child if no other man has performed the essential ceremony.[1]

In the only case in the genealogies in which the husbands of a woman were of different clans, it happened there were only two children, and that one father gave the bow and arrow for the first child and the other for the second.

If the husbands separate, each husband takes with him those children who are his by virtue of the *pursütpimi* ceremony.

595 847 182 There is no doubt whatever as to the close association of the polyandry of the Todas with female infanticide. As we have seen, the Todas now profess to have completely given up the practice of killing their female children, but it is highly probable that the practice is still in vogue to some extent. It has certainly, however, diminished in frequency, and the consequent increase in the proportion of women is leading to some modification in the associated polyandry.

178 182 595 It has been stated by most of those who have written about the Todas that the custom of polyandry is dying out, but a glance at the genealogies will show that the institution is in full working order even in the case of the infant marriages which are being contracted at the present time. There is, however, some reason to believe that it is now less frequent for all the brothers of a family to have one wife only in common. A study of the genealogies shows that often each brother has his own wife, or that several brothers have more than one wife between them. It seemed to me, however, almost certain that in these cases the brothers have the wives in common. In compiling the genealogies, one informant would give me the names of two or more brothers each with one wife, while another would give me the name of one brother with two or three wives, and would say that the other brothers had the same wives. When I pointed out the discrepancy and asked which was the true account, they usually said it made no difference and were almost contemptuous because I seemed to think that there was any disagreement

[1] For an instance, see p. 535.

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between the two versions. I think it probable that it has become less frequent for several brothers to have only one wife in common, but I am very doubtful whether this indicates any real decrease in the prevalence of polyandry. 178 182 595

It seems to me that the correct way of describing the present condition of Toda society is to say that polyandry is as prevalent as ever, but that, owing to the greater number of women, it is becoming associated with polygyny. When there are two brothers it does not seem that each takes a wife for himself, but rather that they take two wives in common.

It is probable that this will lead in time to a state of society in which each brother will come to regard one wife as his own; and in a few cases it seemed to me that there was already a tendency in this direction. If this forecast should be fulfilled, the custom of monogamy among the Todas will have been developed out of polyandry through a stage of combined polyandry and polygyny.

One case happened during my visit which seemed to indicate that though several brothers might be regarded as husbands of a woman, the part of husband for ceremonial purposes might be taken only by one or two of them. In this case I was told that four brothers had one wife, but when the wife died only two of the brothers acted as widowers and performed the ceremonies associated with that condition. When I asked for an explanation of this, I was then told that the other two brothers were not husbands, but I strongly suspected that this was a mere device to enable two of the brothers to avoid the disabilities attendant on the condition of widowerhood. I have very little doubt that while the woman was alive, all the four brothers were her husbands, but after her death it became convenient to assume that only two had been husbands, leaving the others free from the restrictions of widowerhood. 595 765

Many writers have believed that the widely spread custom of the Levirate is a relic of polyandry. If it were true that the custom of polyandry is dying out among the Todas, this people might have provided material for the study of the relations of polyandry and the Levirate. It will be obvious, 587 595

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda



There is often very great disproportion of age in Toda marriages. I have already given two cases in which the woman is the older, in each of which the disproportion of age is due to the custom of marrying a *matchuni*. More commonly the man is much the older, and there are at the present time many cases in which elderly men are married to young girls. This is partly due to the practice of infant marriage. Unless a widower can take advantage of the *tererstthi* custom, which is always expensive, he may have to marry a child and wait till she has reached a marriageable age. Thus, Kòdrner, my guide, lost his wife some years ago, and then married a girl whose present[1] age is only thirteen, Kòdrner being forty-two. The girl is still living with her parents, and will probably not go to her husband for another three or four years.

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## The Custom of 'Tererstthi

The marriage tie among the Todas at the present time has become very loose. Wives are constantly transferred from one husband, or group of husbands, to another, the new husband or husbands paying a certain number of buffaloes to the old. The amount of the compensation or *ter* is settled by a council, and from this the transaction has received its name of *tererstthi*, or "compensation he tells (decides)."[2]

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There is much reason to believe that this custom has altered its character in recent times. I was told that formerly the custom only applied to cases in which a man had lost his wife by death. If he wished to marry a woman who was already the wife of another or others, he went to the father of the woman and asked for his consent. The father would consult with two other elders, and if they were in favour of the proposed transaction the three elders would go to the woman, and if they obtained her consent they then went to her husband for his. If husband or wife were unwilling to be parted nothing was done, but if both consented, the new and

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[1] In 1902.

[2] *Ter* is also used in the sense of 'fine,' but is only used when the fine takes the form of a buffalo or buffaloes. A money fine is called *sarer*.

still in use. Thus the people of Pirspurs have now become the Pämol and the Kusharfol are often named after Umgas, a village in more frequent use than Kusharf. In general the villages belonging to a clan are situated in the same part of the hills, but a clan often possesses outlying villages at a considerable distance from the chief group. Sometimes these outlying villages are of comparatively recent origin, and in other cases they have been established on account of grazing necessities; thus several clans which have their chief seats near Ootacamund have villages in the Kundahs or in the district near Makurti Peak, which are visited in the dry season.

The members of a clan have many common rights and privileges which bind them together, so that the clan-tie has a very real meaning. Property, however, as we shall see shortly, is largely centred in the family or the individual, and the Todas are in a state of social evolution in which the common bond constituted by membership of the clan has been largely replaced by the bond constituted by the family. They are in an intermediate condition between the state of society in which the clan is the social unit and that in which the family has taken this position.

Nearly all who have previously written about the Todas have described them as divided into five clans—viz., the Peiki, Pekkan, Kenna, Todi, or Tothi, and Kuttan. These are the five divisions recognised by the Badagas, and a Badaga knows each Toda as belonging to one of them. The Todas are also perfectly acquainted with these divisions, and they could always say, if asked, to which of them a given village or a given man belonged. If a Toda is asked by a European to which clan or division he belongs, he will probably give one of these names, but I do not believe that they are in use among themselves, being reserved for their intercourse with Badagas and other Indian castes and with Europeans.

The Peiki of the Badaga classification are the Teivaliol; the Pekkan correspond to the Melgarsol, the people of Kidmad and Karsh being also usually included in this group. Kenna is the Badaga name of the Karsol; the Todi or Tothi include two clans, the Nodrsol and the Panol, while the Kuttan com-

1; Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda



## Implements and Utensils

The most important objects in the economic life of the Todas are their dairy vessels, which have been already amply considered. Cooking vessels and implements used for cutting wood or for any other purpose are, like the vessels of the village dairy, procured chiefly from the Kotas, though at the present time the source of supply is probably supplemented by purchases in the bazaar.

As the Todas practise few arts, their need of implements is very small. At one time they used thorns as needles, but now steel needles have taken their place. Thorns are also used for tattooing. Leaves are used as plates and cups, and the fingers take the place of forks. The only definite implements used are knives and axes, the latter being especially needed for procuring firewood.

In some of their ceremonies, the Todas have preserved practices which may possibly be survivals of the use of stone implements. In the funeral ceremonies the buffaloes destined for the next world are killed with the back of an axe, but the buffaloes killed at the *koòtiti* ceremony and at the ceremony of purifying the funeral places must be killed with a stone. Further, the bark of the *tudr* tree used in so many ceremonies must always be knocked off the tree by means of a stone. The latter of these practices must certainly be very ancient, and may well be a relic of an age in which implements were made of stone.

## The Pounder, Sieve, and Broom

The interest of these articles lies in the fact that they are evidently regarded as the emblems of woman. When the *wursol* sleeps in the village hut, these articles are removed from the hut, and when the *ti* buffaloes pass the village of Kiudr, the women who leave this village take with them the pounder, sieve, and broom.

In the case of the *wursol*, this sacred personage may associate with the women themselves if the three objects which seem to be emblematic of womanhood are removed.

I: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda



The pounder, sieve, and broom are burnt at the funerals of women, who use the pounder on their journey to the other world. A special kind of sieve called *kudshmurn* is also burnt at the *azaramkedr*, but I believe that this is burnt at all funerals, both of males and females.

The pounder, sieve, and broom are widely endowed with magical properties, and this is especially the case in India,[1] but I do not know of any other instance in which they are especially regarded as the emblems of woman.

## WEAPONS

At the present time it cannot be said that the Todas use any weapons, but they retain in their ceremonies weapons which were, no doubt, formerly in use. These are the club and the bow and arrow.

The club only remains in the funeral ceremonies, in which it is called *nanmakud* (see Fig. 67), and is burnt at the *azaramkedr*, and several other special sticks are also burnt, which may have been of the nature of clubs.

The bow and arrow have left more traces of their former importance. They are burnt at the *azaramkedr* of a man, and the weapons for this purpose are provided by the Kotas. The bow and arrow are also used in the *kodtiti* ceremony of a Tarthar funeral. In the *pursütpimi* ceremony the husband gives an imitation bow and arrow to his wife. The bow gives its name to the ceremony and its gift forms the essential incident of the ceremony. Further, the bow has a special name different for each clan. The use of an arrow lingers in name in other ceremonies. In the *erkumptthpimi* ceremony, the knife used for cutting up the sacrificed calf is called *ab*, or arrow. In the ceremony of *tersamptpimi* a lock of hair is cut from a young child with a piece of sharpened iron called *kanab*, or "eye arrow," but this name is only in use among the Tartharol. The use of these words seems to point to a time when iron-tipped arrows were used as cutting instruments, and it is even possible that this is a survival of a time when

[1] See Crooke's *Popular Religion and Folk-Lore of Northern India*, 1896, vol. ii. pp. 187–191.

I: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda



the Todas were so much isolated that their only iron was that of the tips of their arrows. 411 174 178

The bow and arrow are also mentioned in the legend of

FIG. 67 (FROM BREEKS).—THE FIRST MAN ON THE LEFT IS HOLDING A BOW AND ARROW; THE SECOND A CLUB (PROBABLY THE 'NANMAKUD') IN HIS RIGHT HAND, AND THE 'TADRI' IN HIS LEFT; THE THIRD MAN IS CARRYING A CLUB, AND THE FOURTH MAN IS PLAYING THE 'BUGURI.'

Kwoten. Teikuteidi was killed by an arrow shot by a lame man who lay down when he shot. It is possible that this legend points to an ancient custom of shooting the bow and arrow by means of the legs.

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda



CHAP. XXI.

It may be, that the bell is a religious symbol of the bell-god —konku dêr. (Note, that herds of cattle, ordinary village droves, never wear a bell.)

I was careful to ascertain if, as has been asserted, a priest superintended on these occasions.[1] My informant, the *ex*-pâlâl, told me, 'We—the pâlâl and kâvilâl—have no duties at a kêdu, nor do we receive presents after a death. If anyone has seen us at a funeral, it is because we want to know what is going on in the district, for we live such lonely lives. But we keep at a distance, because no one may touch us.'

What I have narrated, is a just description of funeral obsequies properly executed, and as indeed, so far as adherence to form goes, they are carried out to this day. But I have ascertained, without any doubt remaining in my own mind, the truth of what Dr. Shortt has written;[6] that old and barren cows are often slain at these funerals.[7] It was formerly the custom to despatch a considerable number of the deceased's own herd for his support in amnôr. But whether the rise in value of buffaloes, or any increase of relative poverty amongst the people, has rendered them loath to deprive the living of a valuable means of sustenance; or if the fact of the Governing Power having limited the slaughter, has demoralised their minds, are points which I cannot decide. The truth remains, that whilst still believing in the necessity for providing the deceased with nutriment, they practically lessen that reduced limit, by despatching what no one knows better than they do, is actually worthless.

This early step in civilisation is, then, a pace backwards —commercial gain, by moral loss.

On the morning after the bara-kêdu, before daybreak, the mantle containing the ashes is taken to the âthârê, at which the original cremation took place. Another buffalo is then killed—a male if for a Peiki or Pekkan: a female if for any of

[6] Shortt, 'Tribes on the Neilgherries.'

[7] See Chapter VII., where I write on the sources of nicknames.

[1] The bara kêdu, or second funeral --Analyst

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda





as may be most convenient to them. In either case, the marriage both in name and in fact, is identical.

It is the custom for the husband to give a feast to his nearest relatives on such a joyous occasion.

It will be seen that up to this stage, the woman is married with her own consent to one man—he who pays the dowry, or gives security to society for his own good behaviour. But now, if the husband has brothers or very near relatives, all living together, they may each, if both she and he consent, participate in the right to be considered her husband also, on making up a share of the dowry that has been paid. In fact it was formerly their almost universal custom—in the days when women were more scarce than they are now—for *a family of near relations to live together in one mand, having wife, children and cattle all in common.*

Now if we consider that one or more brothers may each become the husbands of separate wives by virtue of having each paid a dower, and that younger brothers as they grow to age of maturity, and other brothers as they become widowed, may each, either take separate wives or purchase shares in those already in the family, we can at once understand that any degree of complication in perfectly lawful wedded life, may be met with, from the sample of the single man living with a single wife, to that of the group of relatives married to a group of wives. We begin to see also why tribes following polyandrous habits, endeavour to prevent further complications by making widows 'remain in the family.'

All the children of these very promiscuous unions are held to be brothers and sisters. And as, as is manifest, a generation or two of such marriages must produce inextricable confusion in relationships, so we find that the Todas, who like nothing so much as reducing things to simple formulæ, rather ignore the whole subject, terming them anatama.[1] They will

[1] See Note 19 of Chapter VII.

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda





tradition, to retain, in some instances, more than one daughter in a family; thus forming a small reserve of women, with which the vacancies which would arise in other families, from a deficiency in female births, or from girls not having been raised to years of maturity, find a counterpoise.

The exceptional practice of polyandry, which had, in an unpremeditated manner, thus grown, merely from the infanticide which had disturbed the natural proportion of the sexes, might be expected to retain something of the promiscuous ways, which for ages had been so much in consonance with gregarious and primitive tastes. Now that the custom of infanticide has been relinquished, and the discrepancy between the sexes, which was its immediate fruit, has become less remarkable—though very far from having vanished—I observe communism still remaining *de facto*, the loved habit of the people, whilst monogamy grows to be the national form of marriage. It may be that the Todas in this process of change, are merely *reverting* to an ancient usage—that prior to infanticide—instigated by the natural predilections of unaltered dispositions. Perhaps their habits are becoming modified by the influence of surrounding monogamic races.

I very much doubt if the custom of polyandry, taken in the ordinary acceptation of that word, viz., the union of brothers only, to one wife, can anywhere be found as the sole national form of marriage; thus assuming the airs of a respectable, even if eccentric custom; for, bearing in mind the extreme gregariousness of their dispositions, and intimacy of their lives: considering, also, the absolute necessity for every soul to marry, it is evident that the actual nature of the tie must very greatly depend on the living ratio of the sexes; which, of course, could not be maintained at one undeviating level. When the proportions balance, the savage prefers a promiscuous style: but as they widen, and the males preponderate, the practice of monogamy is seen, coexistent with that of a polyandry in which the husbands are *so-called* brothers.

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60



religion of this exceptionally interesting tribe, numbering, according to the latest census returns, 807 individuals, which inhabits the Nīlgiri plateau. I shall, therefore, content myself with recording the rambling notes made by myself during occasional visits to Ootacamund and Paikāra, supplemented by extracts from the book just referred to, and the writings of Harkness and other pioneers of the Nīlgiris.

The Todas maintain a large-horned race of semi-domesticated buffaloes, on whose milk and its products (butter and ney)* they still depend largely, though to a less extent than in bygone days before the establishment of the Ootacamund bazar, for existence. It has been said that "a Toda's worldly wealth is judged by the number of buffaloes he owns. Witness the story in connection with the recent visit to India of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. A clergyman, who has done mission work among the Todas, generally illustrates Bible tales through the medium of a magic-lantern. One chilly afternoon, the Todas declined to come out of their huts. Thinking they required humouring like children, the reverend gentleman threw on the screen a picture of the Prince of Wales, explaining the object of his tour, and, thinking to impress the Todas, added 'The Prince is exceedingly wealthy, and is bringing out a retinue of two hundred people.' 'Yes, yes,' said an old man, wagging his head sagely, 'but how many buffaloes is he bringing?"

The Todas lead for the most part a simple pastoral life. But I have met with more than one man who had served, or who was still serving Government in the modest capacity of a forest guard, and I have heard of

* Ney = ghi or clarified butter.

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60



262 the hill-sides. The Todas scornfully deny the use of
[832] aphrodisiacs, but both men and women admit that they take sālep misri boiled in milk, to make them strong. Sālep misri is made from the tubers (testicles de chiens) of various species of *Eulophia* and *Habenaria* belonging to the natural order Orchideæ.

252 The indigenous edible plants and pot-herbs include
262 the following:—

(1) *Cnicus Wallichii* (thistle).—The roots and flower-stalks are stripped of their bark, and made into soup or curry.

(2) *Girardinia heterophylla* (Nilgiri nettle).—The tender leafy shoots of vigorously growing plants are gathered, crushed by beating with a stick to destroy the stinging hairs, and made into soup or curry. The fibre
[824] of this plant, which is cultivated near the mands, is used
[294] for stitching the putkuli, with steel needles purchased in
[178] the bazar in lieu of the more primitive form. In the
[443] preparation of the fibre, the bark is thrown into a pot of boiling water, to which ashes have been added. After a few hours' boiling, the bark is taken out and the fibre extracted.

(3) Tender shoots of bamboos eaten in the form of curry.

(4) *Alternanthera sessilis.*
*Stellaria media.*
*Amarantus spinosus.*
*Amarantus polygonoides.*
} Pot-herbs.

262 The following list of plants, of which the fruits are eaten by the Todas, has been brought together by Mr. K. Rangachari:—

*Eugenia Arnottiana.*—The dark purple juice of the
[302] fruit of this tree is used by Toda women for painting
[386] beauty spots on their faces.

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60



262

*Rubus ellipticus.*
*Rubus moluccanus.* } Wild raspberry.
*Rubus lasiocarpus.*
*Fragaria nilgerrensis*, wild strawberry.
*Elæagnus latifolia.* Said by Dr. Mason to make excellent tarts and jellies.
*Gaultheria fragrantissima.*
*Rhodomyrtus tomentosa*, hill gooseberry.
*Loranthus neelgherrensis.*
*Loranthus loniceroides.* } Parasitic on trees.
*Elæocarpus oblongus.*
*Elæocarpus Munronii.*
*Berberis aristata.*
*Berberis nepalensis.* } Barberry.
*Solanum nigrum.*
*Vaccinium Leschenaultii.*
*Vaccinium nilgherrense.*
*Toddalia aculeata.*
*Ceropegia pusilla.*

To which may be added mushrooms.

A list containing the botanical and Toda names of trees, shrubs, etc., used by the Todas in their ordinary life, or in their ceremonial, is given by Dr. Rivers.*

Fire is, in these advanced days, obtained by the Todas in their dwelling huts for domestic purposes from matches. The men who came to be operated on with my measuring instruments had no hesitation in asking for a match, and lighting the cheroots which were distributed amongst them, before they left the Paikâra bungalow dining-room. Within the precincts of the dairy temple the use of matches is forbidden, and fire is kindled with the aid of two dry sticks of *Litsæa*

372 [178] [276] 234 372

* *Op. cit.* Appendix IV, 738.

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60



346 In addition to the dairies which in form resemble the
234 dwelling-huts, the Todas keep up as dairy-temples certain curious conical edifices, of which there are said to be four on the Nīlgiri plateau, viz., at the Muttanād mand, near Kotagiri, near Sholūr, and at Mudimand. The last was out of repair a few years ago, but was, I was informed, going to be rebuilt shortly. It is suggested by Dr. Rivers as probable that in many cases a dairy, originally
● [178] of the conical form, has been rebuilt in the same form as the dwelling-hut, owing to the difficulty and extra labour of reconstruction in the older shape. The edifice at the Muttanād mand (or Nōdrs), at the top of the Sīgūr ghāt, is known to members of the Ootacamund Hunt as the Toda cathedral. It has a circular stone base and a tall conical thatched roof crowned with a large flat stone, and is
[184] surrounded by a circular stone wall. To penetrate within the sacred edifice was forbidden, but we were informed that it contained milking vessels, dairy apparatus, and a swāmi in the guise of a copper bell (mani). The dairyman is known as the varzhal or wursol. In
178 front of the cattle-pen of the neighbouring mand, I noticed a grass-covered mound, which, I was told, is sacred. The mound contains nothing buried within it, but
[164] the bodies of the dead are placed near it, and earth from the mound is placed on the corpse before it is removed to the burning-ground. At "dry funerals" the buffalo is said to be slain near the mound. It has been suggested
346 by Colonel Marshall * that the "boa or boath [poh.] is not
174 a true Toda building, but may be the bethel of some tribe contemporaneous with, and cognate to the Todas, which, taking refuge, like them, on these hills, died out in their presence."

[113]

* A Phrenologist among the Todas, 1873.

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60



595 851 842 805 824 when they return to the mand. The time is determined, in the vicinity of Ootacamund, by the opening of the flowers of *Onothera tetraptera* (evening primrose), a garden escape called by the Todas āru mani pūv (six o'clock flower), which opens towards evening.* It may [765] be noted that, at the second funeral of a male, a miniature bow and three arrows are burnt with various other articles within the stone circle (azaram).

648 585 A few years ago (1902), the Todas, in a petition to Government, prayed for special legislation to legalise their marriages on the lines of the Malabar Marriage Act. The Government was of opinion that legislation was unnecessary, and that it was open to such of the Todas as were willing to sign the declaration prescribed by section 10 of the Marriage Act III of 1872 to contract legal marriages under the provision of that Act. The Treasury Deputy Collector of the Nīlgiris was appointed Registrar of Toda marriages. No marriage has been registered up to the present time.

847 178 The practice of infanticide among the Todas is best summed up in the words of an aged Toda during an interview with Colonel Marshall.† "I was a little boy when Mr. Sullivan (the first English pioneer of the Nilgiris) visited these mountains. In those days it was the custom to kill children, but the practice has long died out, and now one never hears of it. I don't know whether it was wrong or not to kill them, but we were very poor, and could not support our children. Now every one has a mantle (putkuli), but formerly there was only one for the whole family. We did not kill them to please any god, but because it was our custom. The mother never nursed the child, and the parents did

* I have seen this plant growing on the guns in front of the Pukhūr bungalow.
† *Op. cit.*

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60



not kill it. Do you think we could kill it ourselves? Those tell lies who say we laid it down before the opening of the buffalo-pen, so that it might be run over and killed by the animals. We never did such things, and it is all nonsense that we drowned it in buffalo's milk. Boys were never killed—only girls; not those who were sickly and deformed—that would be a sin; but, when we had one girl, or in some families two girls, those that followed were killed. An old woman (kelachi) used to take the child immediately it was born, and close its nostrils, ears, and mouth with a cloth thus—here pantomimic action. It would shortly droop its head, and go to sleep. We then buried it in the ground. The kelachi got a present of four annas for the deed." The old man's remark about the cattle-pen refers to the Malagasy custom of placing a new-born child at the entrance to a cattle-pen, and then driving the cattle over it, to see whether they would trample on it or not.* The Missionary Metz† bears out the statement that the Toda babies were killed by suffocation.

At the census, 1901, 453 male and 354 female Todas were returned. In a note on the proportion of the sexes among the Todas, Mr. R. C. Punnett states‡ that "all who have studied the Todas are agreed upon the frequency of the practice (of infanticide) in earlier times. Marshall, writing in 1872, refers to the large amount of female infanticide in former years, but expresses his conviction that the practice had by that time died out. Marshall's evidence is that of native assurance only. Dr. Rivers, who received the same assurance, is disinclined to place much confidence in

* Ellis. History of Madagascar.

† Tribes inhabiting the Neilgherry Hills. By a German missionary, 1856.

‡ Proc. Cambridge Philosoph. Soc., XII, 1904.

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60



847 native veracity with reference to this point, and, in view
178 of the lack of encouragement which the practice receives from the Indian Government, this is not altogether surprising. The supposition of female infanticide, by accounting for the great disproportion in the numbers of the sexes, brings the Todas into harmony with what is known of the rest of mankind." In summarising his conclusions, Mr. Punnett notes that:—

[162] (1) Among the Todas, males predominate greatly over females.

(2) This preponderance is doubtless due to the practice of female infanticide, which is probably still to some extent prevalent.

(3) The numerical preponderance of the males has been steadily sinking during recent years, owing probably to the check which foreign intercourse has imposed upon female infanticide.

764 In connection with the death ceremonies of the Todas, Dr. Rivers notes that "soon after death the body is burnt, and the general name for the ceremony on this occasion is etvainolkedr, the first day funeral. After an interval, which may vary greatly in length, a second
[765] ceremony is performed, connected with certain relics of the deceased which have been preserved from the first occasion. The Toda name for this second funeral ceremony is marvainolkedr, the second day funeral, or
' again which day funeral.' The funeral ceremonies are
[574] open to all, and visitors are often invited by the Todas. In consequence, the funeral rites are better known, and have been more frequently described than any other features of Toda ceremonial. Like nearly every institu-
764 tion of the Todas, however, they have become known to
192 Europeans under their Badaga names. The first funeral is called by the Badagas hase kedu, the fresh or green

L-5 (1935-1937) 1938
AW60 Toda AW60



is remarkable when we consider that the interchange between Badagas and Kotas has broken down almost entirely. This latter break-down however is primarily due to religious changes in the Badaga community. One of the main services supplied by Kotas to Badagas was music at funerals. The majority of the Badagas have reformed their customs in this respect and no longer requiring music and having a convenient source of tools and pots at hand in the bazaars, this section of the Badagas has repudiated with some heat all connexions with the Kota community, especially as the Kotas by expanding their agricultural activities and aspiring to a higher status in the hierarchy of the tribes of the hills have come into quarrelsome conflict with the Badagas. That the Todas have not broken off relations with the Kotas is probably due primarily to their adherence to the old system of acquiring tools and pots and to their desire for the Kota music at funerals. Even this latter item may arise in the future as a source of conflict, since the anti-music tendency of the Badagas has begun to infect the Kotas, or at least one of their most articulate reformers. He is however at present an object of great suspicion to the conservative members of the Kota community and it is improbable that the Todas will be deprived of their funeral music until a fairly remote future. The two tribes do not come into economic conflict, as do the Badagas and the Kotas, nor do Kota caste-aspirations bring them into conflict with the Todas, who as the highest ranking aboriginal community of the hills are immeasurably above the Kotas in their own estimation and look upon the Kota aspirations, if they pay any attention to them at all, with a lordly disdain. My Kota informant, the above-mentioned reformer, has also observed to me rather pathetically that the Todas are a friendly people while the Kotas are quarrelsome, and it is probable that this lordly condescension of the Todas keeps the Kotas on friendly terms with them, while the pushing, nouveau riche attitude easily observed in the Badagas antagonises a caste like the Kotas who having a relatively low position yet do not feel themselves much inferior to the Badagas and certainly will not openly admit any inferiority.

The land basis of Toda economic life is pasturage for the herds. This has been affected adversely by the influx of immi-

10: Emeneau L-5 (1935-1937) 1938
AW60 Toda AW60



Todas who have no buffaloes and no means of making a sufficient living within the tribal structure find employment on tea-estates. Others who live near Ootacamund make their living by tending cattle, an occupation congenial to pastoralists. In most cases they live in their own villages and do not find their participation in the communal life of the tribe too much restricted by their extra-tribal economic activities.

In matters of social oraganization no change of any great importance can be found since Rivers made his investigations. The marriage system seems to work quite as it did then, fraternal polyandry modified by polygyny. Rivers' prediction that in time monogamy would prevail is not yet fulfilled. Though it is impossible without a statistical study of Rivers' genealogies brought up to date to make any valid statement concerning the decrease or otherwise of polyandry, I have got no information that would lead me to believe that the institution is a dying one.

In conjunction with the normal marriage system, in which each of the moieties of the tribe is endogamous, there is another institution, whereby a man from one moiety lives with a woman of the other moiety, each member of the couple having as well his or her legal spouse. Any children resulting from this union are reckoned for all purposes as children of the woman by her husband within her own moiety. In fact, if a man resembles closely his mother's lover (called mox$^{\theta}$o:tjfojo:*l*), this fact may be thrown up to him as an insult ("son of so-and-so [ the mother's lover ]!"). Rivers' described (p. 534) how the headman kum$^{i}$ja*ll* made an innovation by taking a wife from the moiety not his own, or rather by taking a woman, as he was entitled to do, by the mox$^{\theta}$o:tjfoj institution but insisting on giving compensation for her to her husband as if she were a woman of his own moiety, i. e. by treating her as his legal wife. This innovation made a great impact on Toda consciousness and is still spoken of and referred to in any songs about kum$^{i}$ja*ll* or the children of this union. The example was followed in ku$^{m:}$ja*ll*'s lifetime by several men, but all these unions have been dissolved by death, and since ku$^{m:}$ja*ll*'s death no fresh example has been allowed by the chief men of the tribe. The innovation, which if continued would probably

10: Emeneau L-5 (1935-1937) 1938
AW60 Toda AW60



have had far-reaching social consequences,[1] has been stamped out, and almost the only trace remains in the persons of kum:ɨ-jaɭɭ's children by this union, who are still spoken of as his children though legally they belong to the other moiety. kum:ɨjaɭɭ, who was a man of great force and influence, was able to go against the long-established custom of the tribe, but as soon as his influence was removed, conservatism prevailed.

One Toda interest of high rating is the catching of buffaloes at funerals. The men who are to catch the buffaloes line up at a spot which is fixed for each funeral-place and at a given signal all drop their garments and sprint for the swamp where the buffaloes have been stationed. Great honor attaches to the man who wins in this race and reaches the buffaloes first, and honor also goes to those who handle the buffaloes most skilfully when they are caught and being brought to the spot where they are to be killed. Women are inclined to grant sexual favors more often and more readily to young men who are known for their prowess in this matter. Even old men who can no longer compete with the young ones in running demand an opportunity to catch buffaloes. Arrangements are usually made to give them their chance. Certain buffaloes are assigned to certain old men, who then take their seats near these buffaloes and catch them while the young men are running for and catching the others. Quarrels frequently arise on this account, since the young men grudge the

[1] While it is futile to speculate on what might have been, yet it is interesting to trace in a mechanical manner the primary results if this innovation had been carried through so that it became the only allowable type of marriage, no other change taking place and all the present rules of paternity and of residence remaining in force. Organization would have been as follows. The tribe would consist of two exogamous moieties. A man would be legally the son, not of his mother's husband, but of her male cross-cousin within her own moiety, since at present cross-cousin marriage is the preferred type for a woman's first marriage. Since a woman of the tɵuɭɭ moiety may not live at, or even enter, a village of the tɵrθaɤ moiety and no woman has any ceremonial function in connexion with the buffaloes and the dairy cult, the present villages of the tɵrθaɤ moiety would be abandoned as dwelling places but would be ceremonially and economically important as the places where the dairy operations and rituals of certain herds were carried on. Ownership in these herds as well as in the herds of the most sacred grade of dairies, the ti:- dairies, which now belong to the tɵrθaɤ moiety, would descend to a man of this moiety from his mother's male cross-cousin within her moiety. All of which is complicated, but not impossible.

10: Emeneau L-5 (1935-1937) 1938
AW60 Toda AW60



887 764 554 526 [548] old ones this opportunity and sometimes catch the old men's assigned animals before the latter can reach them. Old men retaliate sometimes by stepping in when the young men are unable to control a buffalo that has been caught. In the latter case the old man is inclined to boast inordinately of his prowess. [533] Great speed in running and skill in catching buffaloes is celebrated in the songs. Adventitious rewards are occasionally 764 554 526 given to the winner in the race for the buffaloes. E. g. about twenty years ago at the funeral of kanmṛ (Rivers' genealogical table 63), kumṛalf, the headman of the tribe, offered a fine cloak to the winner in the race. It was won by kenodṛ (21), who still dwells on this proof of his former prowess. If this interest needs any buttressing, it has recently been provided by the Ootacmund 648 526 Hunt, which initiated in 1936 at the point-to-point race meet a cross-country running race for Todas. In that year and in 1937 the race was of about a mile and a quarter over rolling downs. It was won both years in remarkably fast time by a young man, [789] who was said at the time to have gone to the Kurumbas beforehand for charms to help him to win. This innovation, which will no doubt last as long as the Ootacamund Hunt, merely adds another small item to a highly-developed interest and fits well into the Toda pattern.

291 179 Toda men's costume has been affected to a slight extent by the influence of the immigrant plainspeople. I have already described the proper Toda clothes in my paper *Toda Garments and Embroidery*. In addition to these most men nowadays wear a shirt under the cloak in the manner made familiar to them by the Indians in the bazaar. A turban of bright-colored cloth or silk [292] is also affected, by headmen usually and by all others who can afford it for festal occasions. That this is a borrowing is easily seen from the clumsy efforts that the men make in tying the turban and from the lack of any uniform style in the result. Some young men also wear a bright-colored neckerchief knotted in front as a fairly regular part of their costume; this is a very [178] recent innovation and seems to be an independent invention. [784] None of these new garments may be worn when the men go [234] inside the walls surrounding the dairies. The waistcloth, though it seems to be an innovation of about a century ago, is worn near

The dwelling houses form no part of the complex, and so there are tōunoːṛ without houses, as is preeminently the case with the highest grade of dairies, the tiː. There may also be munds without dairies, and these are not tōunoːṛ. Some munds also which have dairies are not tōunoːṛ. They were founded in comparatively recent times because the herds tended at a tōunoːṛ became too large and new dairy accommodation had to be built. Their comparative lack of sanctity is indicated by the fragmentary nature of the prayers used at them and by the fact that a dairyman-priest may not be ordained for them but must be ordained for one of the tōunoːṛ of the sib and after serving there for a short time must go on to the less sacred place. This type of mund as well as those without dairies are known as maxmoḍ, as opposed to the tōunoːṛ, which are mtumḍmoḍ "important or chief mund." In each case a tōunoːṛ is said to have been founded in the beginning by the tōuθuṭ associated with the sib, a maxmoḍ to have been a human creation.

When a tōunoːṛ is entirely abandoned and its dairy no longer used, the Todas may revive it after a period of as long as fifty years or even longer. This usually happens because the diviners so order it when misfortune has overtaken the sib or because a buffalo wanders to the abandoned site and the diviners interpret its actions as directed by the tōunoːṛ who wishes the people to cease their neglect. The Todas in their religious thinking have not found it necessary to speculate about the fate of a tōunoːṛ when a mund is never revived. Nor are they troubled by the question of the relationship between the sacred buffaloes of a sib and the various dairy-complexes at which they are tended. Each sib operates a number of complexes and the same buffaloes may be kept at any of them in turn.

When Rivers said that each sib has a "ruling deity," he referred to the tōuθuṭ. The Toda phrase which he gave, nōdrodehi, i. e. noːṛoḍeiˉ, means "(the deity, i. e. the tōuθuṭ) ruled, or owned, the sacred place," or as one informant translated "used the mund." For each "chief mund" (mtumḍmoḍ or tōunoːṛ) was created, as we have said, by a tōuθuṭ who founded the dairy operations there and carried them on in the beginning.

10:Emeneau L-5 (1935-1937) 1938
AW60 Toda AW60



Rivers says (p. 453): "The present state of the Toda religion seems to be one in which ritual has persisted while the beliefs at the bottom of the ritual have largely disappeared." By "beliefs" he referred to the stories of those gods, such as tö:kiȩj and the rest, whom we have shown above to be the töuθut. Since they are distinct from the töunoːr, it is clear that the ritual of the dairy-complex has no connexion with the beliefs about the töuθut. It is true that the dairy-complexes are of much greater interest to the Toda than the other gods, but these latter have quite as much power to cause misfortune as the former, opportunities only arising less frequently. We may probably see in the highly developed ritual of the dairies a product of long accretion, starting originally no doubt from the fairly general Indian belief in the sanctity of cattle. The steps by which this grew into the present cult cannot be discovered. But if this is the origin of the Toda ritualized dairy-practice, we need not expect anything more in the way of beliefs than we actually find, viz. anecdotes to explain anomalies of various dairy-complexes. Long origin stories are lacking, everything being referred either to these anecdotes for a few abnormal details or to creation in general terms by tö:kiȩj and the other töuθut for the general scheme of things. It is possible that tö:kiȩj and the gods associated with her represent an older layer of belief than the dairy-complex gods, but no evidence is forthcoming other than the chronology given in the Toda myths. About the former gods, the töuθut, stories are still told in the vague way of which Rivers complained (p. 453 middle). But this vagueness is really merely a sketchiness of detail that I have found in all Toda story-telling, arising from a lack of interest in the story-telling technique, not from a lack of interest in the stories (see my paper *An Echo-word Motif in Dravidian Folk-tales*). There is no reason to suppose that the stories of the old gods will ever be forgotten while the tribe survives.

Into the close-knit nexus of the Toda dairy-complex no change is likely to come except in matters of detail, and no such change since Rivers' time is known to me. Short of complete abandonment of the system it is hard to conceive of any radical alteration. But, as was already noted by Rivers (pp. 457-8 worship of Hindu deities can go on "side by side with the proper religion of the Todas."

10:Emeneau L-5 (1935-1937) 1938
AW60 Toda AW60



worship of Hindu deities can go on "side by side with the proper religion of the Todas." Vows are made to temples for increase of the buffaloes, for speedy completion of the rebuilding of a dairy, for children or for other objects. If the boon asked for is obtained, the promised vow is fulfilled; otherwise, not. In most cases a man when paying the vow goes to the temple to which it has been made, shaves his hair and beard, bathes, and hands over to the temple the gift he has promised, a small silver image of a buffalo or a dairy or a sum of money. Fashions change in temples, according as reputation for power rises or falls. Certain temples very near the hills have been visited in paying vows for a very long time. Visits to Nanjangud in Mysore State began according to my informants less than a century ago. Vows to Mariamma's temple in Ootacamund have been made only in very recent times. Most curious is the making of vows to the mosque at Nagore, on the coast east of Tanjore. This holy-place was learned of from Mohammedan ghee-merchants in Ootacamund. The first vow by a Toda to this place was made by nörnmę (Rivers' genealogical table 20) and paid after his death by his classificatory son ayjar; this was before Rivers' time. One of my informants went there in 1929 by train and gave a silver buffalo in payment of his vow. Such offerings of images are apparently accepted and no doubt sold at a yearly auction of offerings, as in Hindu temples. Toda vows to a Mohammedan shrine are an excellent illustration of the syncretistic tendencies of unlettered peoples in India. The Todas, who know well enough that the place of worship in Nagore is a Mohammedan mosque, do not regard it as any different from a Hindu temple that has shown itself to be powerful in granting boons. They call the deity there a tŏu and it seems that it is really a Mohammedan saint buried at the mosque who is supposed to be the god of the place.

Apart from the outside influence just discussed, the only other influence that I have been able to find shows itself in a theological belief already mentioned by Rivers (p. 456). This is to the effect that the supreme god is ŏonj (indirectly borrowed from Sanskrit svāmin), and all the other gods are his servants. So it was phrased by kimmę (Rivers' genealogical table 26; one

10:Emeneau L-5 (1935-1937) 1938
AW60 Toda AW60



the chief changes, payment of vows to Hindu temples and a belief in a supreme god, were already firmly established thirty-five years ago, and even these have had little effect on the firm core of Toda religious life, important as the payment of vows is in Toda eyes, since they have been merely additions and have set up no conflicts within the old pattern. In social matters such changes as can be seen are mere surface additions, again causing no conflict within the pattern. The innovation in marriage customs attempted by kum:ja/f and recorded by Rivers, which would have produced stress, has been eliminated by the conservatism of the tribe. Most change is seen in economic life, and that in the way of gradual impoverishment through alienation of land and contracting debts in the bazaars, which had set in long before Rivers made his description. Change in the pattern has not yet resulted, in spite of the abortive attempt that was made by the Toda Amelioration Scheme to add agriculture to the life of pastoralists. If a prediction is worth anything, it may be guessed that so long as the economic system is guarded against breakup, as it is now, the tribe will remain as it is now and as it was thirty-five years ago.

There remains the important question of the effect of outside influences on the population figures of the Todas. Rivers in 1906 recorded his conclusion ( p. 475 ): " The Census Reports and the genealogical record agree in pointing to a diminution of the Toda population about the middle of the last century which has now ceased, the probability being that the Todas are increasing slightly in number.....Any decrease....was the direct result of the changes brought about by the advent of Europeans to the Nilgiri Hills." He goes on to refer especially to the influences, injurious to fertility, of syphilis and sexual immorality, and we should surely add gonorrhea. By sexual immorality he seems to mean especially intercourse between women of the tribe and men of other communities. This, though it undoubtedly occurs, is probably of minor importance as compared with the normal system within the tribe. It is probable that the great freedom of sexual intercourse permitted to women by the polyandrous system combined with the monoc:tjfoj institution by which a woman has at least one " lover " belonging to the other moiety and the freedom to enjoy

11:Emeneau L-5 (1935-1938) 1939
AW60 Toda AW60



841 Finally we come to the question of the woman's personal hygiene during menses. As is very usual, a bath is prescribed after menstruation is over, to remove the last traces of uncleanliness. But, very unusual among primitive communities, the Toda woman during her period wears a sanitary napkin designed to absorb the flow of blood. Formerly it was made of moss wrapped into a pad with a piece of cloth and attached before and behind to the usual silver or brass chain girdle or, failing this, to a waist-string. At present rags [178] are more common in the munds than formerly and the pad may be made wholly of rags. The pad is changed when necessary, and all discarded ones [171] are burnt. Such pads are also used by Kota and by Badaga women, but their use has not been reported, so far as I know, for the women of any other Indian community.

841 794 563 177 The contrast between the menstrual regulations of the Todas and those of other Indian communities is neatly pointed by the habits of the small Toda Christian community. The converted Toda women have not been sufficient in number to provide wives for all the Toda men converts and the deficiency has been made up by converted Tamilian women. The two sets of women continue their pre-Christian customs during menstruation. The Toda women wear the sanitary napkin and continue to cook and to live in all parts of the house. The Tamilian women, on the other hand, wear no napkins, refuse to cook and will not even enter the room where the cooking-hearth is built.

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60



In religion, the Todas are definitely not Hindu. They do go on pilgrimage to Hindu shrines, and their diviners have some sort of esoteric contact with temples in Malabar. But the Toda faith is not of the orthodox Hindu kind, and their gods have quite different names and natures.[1]

Today, the Toda gods are very hazy figures. What has happened is that with the passage of time, ritual has come to play so important a part in religious practices, that a clear conception of the deities is now quite beyond the Todas. From the elders whom I questioned (especially Ujar, 48)[2] – they are the only persons who know something about this nowadays – I obtained, however, information concerning an intricate and rich mythology. This describes an early period in which the gods moved freely with men in the Nilgiris. They led the same kind of pastoral life as the latter do today, caring for their herds of buffaloes and processing their milk in their dairy-temples. Only some of these gods are reputed to be still present on the plateau, each living on the summit of a distinctive hill.

It will not be necessary to enlarge here upon the Toda religion. Rivers' account of it, to which readers are again referred, is, broadly speaking, accurate and exhaustive, and will be enough to give a very good idea of its nature. The principal gods most frequently mentioned by the Todas and about whom it will be sufficient to know in the present connection are the following: 1) *Ön*, the Lord of the Underworld (*Amnor*) to which he retired after a long period in the Nilgiris; while he was still living there, he created, together with his wife, *Pinakursh*, men (*Olkh* = Todas) as well as the Toda sacred buffaloes; 2) *Terkish*, the sister of Ön; she is by far the leading Toda deity, amounting to a protective tribal mother-goddess, of whom you hear continually; she is reputed to have stayed behind in the Nilgiris when Ön retired to Amnor; she has her earthly residence at the summit of a hill called Tödhut near Ootacamund; the Todas say that she is, however, omnipresent, to be found anywhere in the world; in their language, the Blue Mountains are called after her, *Terkishnor*, or the land of Terkish.

[1] During my last stay in the Nilgiris, it was my good fortune to discover what appeared to me to be eleven Sumerian deities among the six hundred or so gods and goddesses which compose the Toda pantheon, something which would go to indicate a very early cultural connection indeed with the world of Antiquity (*Possible Sumerian Survivals in Toda Ritual*, by the same author, see Bibliography).

[2] Whenever a Toda name is followed by a number such as here, the latter refers to the corresponding genealogical table in *The Todas*, by W. H. R. Rivers.

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60



428 614 on the men's side of the *polm* (a subdivision of the clan in which members are grouped for certain economic duties incumbent upon them, see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 544) succeeding to the property of those men who die without male issue. There is never any adoption 597 of children and the custom is unknown.

614 The two moieties of the Todas are endogamous, Tardharsh marrying only Tardharsh and Teivilkh only Teivilkh. But inside each of these [616] sections, the paternal clans and matrilineal descent groups are strictly [837] exogamous. Extra-marital relations within these, when they occur – [582] which they undoubtedly do – practically exclusively take place between members of the paternal clans and never, it can safely be said, within the polkhliol. They are always considered incestuous. Avoidance of [835] this kind is pushed so far, at least in public, that when, for instance, I [123] once took Peidz of Karsh (44) for a ride in my car with one of the sons of Tilipa of Karsh (12), he refused to sit on the seat at the back with her but insisted on being next to me, because, he said, she was his classificatory grandmother.

582 Child-marriage is regularly practised, little Toda boys and girls being betrothed before they are three years old, preferably to their 584 *matchuni* or cross-cousin, that is, the son or daughter of their father's sister or of their mother's brother. If no *matchuni* properly speaking is available, some other child, classified as such by extension of the term in accordance with Toda kinship usages, is generally chosen, the rules of endogamy and exogamy being, of course, observed.

581 As is usual in India, the object of these child-marriages seems to be 584 mainly religious. It is considered that no one can properly accomplish [775] his or her duties to the gods unless he or she is married. Death, especially for someone single, would be a calamity, as he or she would not be able to enter Amnor and would wander aimlessly about as a [588] ghost. That is why, when a Toda child dies before being married, [766] however young (even only a few days), its body has first to be wedded to somebody appropriate before the funeral ceremony can be proceeded with.

595 The Todas are known to be polyandrous, and the custom is wide-178 spread and still very vigorous within the tribe. But they are not only that, being also polygynous, sometimes forming conjoint-marriages, and monogamous. I found them practising all these forms of marriage as widely as in the days of Rivers, although the latter did make the arresting remark that monogamy with them might well develop out of polyandry combined with polygyny, each of the men in such a species

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60



of what he calls "group marriage" tending more and more to look upon one of the women as his own (see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 519).

From what has been stated above, it will be clear that, because of many rules and regulations about whom one may marry and whom one may not, Todas, apart from child-marriage, find it difficult, when adult, to get themselves a wife. The number of women is very limited, and many of them are ineligible because of social barriers, so that not a few men would remain single were it not for the time-honoured custom of *terershti*, or that of the transfer of wives. Rivers describes the latter as a sort of peaceful pact which is negotiated at a meeting between the husband or husbands of a woman and a man or a group of men who wish to take her to wife, compensation (*ter*) to be paid to the losing party in buffaloes being decided first, (*terershti*, "compensation he decides", see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 523).

But when I was in the Nilgiris, transference of wives never took place except forcibly, and it was up to the *noim*, after the abduction had taken place, to fix the amount of animals that should be paid to the aggrieved party in compensation. Nowadays, no longer content with taking the case to the *noim*, some Todas are appealing direct to the Government for help, requesting even that the latter intervene actively to put an end to a custom which, with time, and no doubt because of outside influence, is becoming increasingly distasteful to them. So long, however, as there exists so great a disproportion between the numbers of men to women, and tribal regulations concerning moiety endogamy and clan exogamy are so strictly observed, there seems to be no other solution for the men to the dearth of wives than continually to be taking them from one another, while paying due compensation, so that all of them have at least a time during which they are married.

Some Toda women whom I have met have been wives to no less than seven men or groups of men, remaining with these for a year or so before being carried off again by another or others. Among them have been those who have taken pride in recounting how many buffaloes were paid in compensation for them, as in the eyes of the men, their prestige seems to be in direct proportion to the importance of the figure. Women carried off leave their children if the latter are big enough, but take them with them to their new home if they are small. When they grow up, they will return to the clan of their official father.

Of course, what makes it easier for Toda men to accept polyandry and the stealing of each other's wives, is that fatherhood of the off-

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60



married Nalsirwuf, ceased being head of his immediate family (although he was chief of the Melgarsh *modol*) and Pads, who already was the legal father of Mutnarsh, Kuddhue and Munbokwutn, became so in his place. The mother never has any very important say in family matters, and is treated as nothing more than an exalted kind of house servant.

As I have shown when discussing the question of Toda aggression, there is considerable jealousy among members of the tribe, in such matters as property and prestige. In sexual matters, however, there seems to be less of it, no doubt because their institutions allow for a number of outlets for their varying sexual fancy. Thus, the custom of *terershti* allows a man to carry off the neighbour's wife whom he covets, provided compensation in buffaloes is paid to the aggrieved party, and that of *mokhthoditi* for him to take as partner any woman of the tribe regardless of the moiety to which she belongs. There are other examples that could be quoted, such as, for instance, the privilege enjoyed by the lower class of Teivilkh priest of free access to all the women of the *mad* in which they serve and the Toda-Muduga exchange of wives of which Fürer-Haimendorf has spoken.

In spite of this, however, Kanvarsathi and various of my informants were unanimous in stating that sexual jealousy did exist among the Todas and, as they said, "more than it used to". There is a growing modern trend of resistance to *terershti*, the authority of the *noim* in such matters being often challenged now by an appeal to the Government. Again, informants claimed that the Todas did not take so readily any more to polyandry as before – although I, personally, could not see any falling away from this traditional form of marriage. The fact is, however, that jealousy with the Todas is not as curbed as it is with other polyandrous people. Because the property is divided between the brothers, it is as if jealousy were not banned as a serious threat to economic well-being as it is with others. The Todas, to put it briefly and in the language of polyanders elsewhere, "can afford to be jealous", and they are so at times with those outbursts of homicidal violence of which I have spoken earlier, when treating of the subject of their aggression.

Regulation of sexual intercourse in a Toda polyandrous household is again a matter af tacit understanding between the plural partners. Asked if there were any signalling system, my informants without exception ridiculed the idea, stating that it might perhaps have existed in the past but certainly did not now. During my entire stay in the Niligiris, I never came across any evidence of it. In the Melgarsh family, which I specially studied, it appeared that the common wife, Erzigwuf, had no